

“The Freedom of a Christian” in Historical Context

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1400

- *Jan Hus burned at the stake in Bohemia (Czech Republic) 1415*

1425

- *Joan of Arc burned at the stake 1431*
- *Inca Dynasty in South America founded 1438*

1450

- *Constantinople falls to Ottoman army, becomes Istanbul 1453*
- Printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Mianz, Germany 1450

1475

- *Spanish Inquisition begins 1481*
- *Christopher Columbus lands in the Americas 1492*

Martin Luther born in Eisleben on November 10, 1483

Katharina von Bora born 1499

1500

- *Michelangelo begins work on the statue David 1501*
- *Atlantic slave trade begins 1502*
- *Leonardo da Vinci begins painting the Mona Lisa 1503*
- *Copernicus declares the sun is at the center of the solar system 1512*
- *Spanish conquest of Mexico 1519*
- *Magellan and Elcano complete first circumnavigation of the earth 1522*

Leo X becomes Pope 1513

Philip Melancthon joins Wittenberg faculty 1518

Charles V elected Holy Roman Emperor 1519

Peasants' War in Germany 1524

Luther

1501 – enters the University at Erfurt, studies law

1505 – becomes an Augustinian monk

1507 – ordained as a priest

1512 – called to Wittenberg faculty, mentored by Johann von Staupitz, friend of

Frederick the Wise of Saxony, an Elector of the Holy Roman Emperor

1512 (?) – has his “tower experience” while studying Romans 1:17-18

October 31, 1517 – posts his Ninety-Five Theses – points for debate, against *indulgences*

- 1518 – writes the Heidelberg Disputation – articulates ‘theology of the cross’
- 1518 – questioned by Cardinal Cajetan, papal legate to Diet of Augsburg
- 1519 – questioned by professor Johann Eck at the Leipzig Disputation
- 1520 – threatened with excommunication by papal bull (decree), which he later burns at the Elster Gate in Wittenberg
- writes Address to the Christian Nobility – articulates ‘priesthood of all believers’
- writes The Babylonian Captivity of the Church – articulates view of sacraments
- writes The Freedom of a Christian
- ~ Encouraged by Karl von Miltitz and others (482), Luther writes a letter to Pope Leo X on Sept 6, 1520 in defense of his actions and to seek reconciliation
 - ~ Attaches *The Freedom of a Christian* as a “little tract,” with the prospect of “established peace and good hope” and as an example of the studies to which he would like to return (486)
 - ~ Writes it contains “a summary of the whole Christian life” (487)
 - ~ Published in November, 1520 – thirty printings between 1520 and 1526 (468)
 - ~ *We are saved by grace through faith for loving service*
- 1521 – questioned at the Diet of Worms – refuses to recant – is excommunicated and declared an outlaw – his friends kidnap him to Wartburg Castle (stayed 10 months)
- 1522 – translates New Testament into German
- preaches The Eight Wittenberg Sermons – calls for love and patience in reformation
- 1523 – publishes Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed – articulates view of ‘two kingdoms’

1525

- *Church of England breaks away from Roman Catholic Church 1531*
- *Cartier claims Quebec for France 1534*
- *William Tyndale’s partial translation of the Bible into English published 1537*
- *Council of Trent begins meeting 1545*

Diet of Speyer, “Protestant” princes against Edict of Worms 1529

Diet of Augsburg, Augsburg Confession signed 1530

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Philip Melanchthon 1531

Radical Anabaptists led Munster Rebellion 1534

John Calvin publishes “Institutes of the Christian Religion” 1536

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Philip Melanchthon 1537

Luther

1525 – marries Katharina von Bora

– writes The Bondage of the Will – articulates total dependence on grace of God

ca 1528 – writes “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

1529 – publishes Small Catechism, educate families, Large Catechism, educate clergy

– attends the Marburg Colloquy – disagrees with Ulrich Zwingli on Lord’s Supper

1534 – (with others) translates Old Testament into German

1537 – publishes The Smalcald Articles – overview of Luther’s theology

1543 – publishes On the Jews and Their Lies

Martin Luther dies in Eisleben on February 18, 1546

1550

Formula of Concord in Torgau, Germany 1577

The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church published 1580

“The Freedom of a Christian” Outline

Sessions

1. Pages 487-496: Faith; Two Themes; the Inner Person; the Word of God; Faith Alone Justifies
2. Pages 496-510: Three Benefits of Faith; the ‘Joyous Exchange’; Priests and Kings
3. Pages 510-524: the Outer Person; Good Works; Faith Alone Justifies; Serving Neighbors; the Christian Life
4. Pages 524-538: Fruits of Faith; True Christian’s Knowledge; Against the Freedom of the Flesh

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